ENGLAND: A Democracy, Presided Over by a Monarchy and Governed by an Oligarchy.

BY SYDNEY BROOKS.

There have been many names given to the British form of government. As a rule, people speak of it as a "constitutional monarchy." Some have called it a "veiled republic"; others, a "kingly commonwealth". I have long thought a more accurate one might be found. If I were asked to sum up the British system in a sentence, it would run something like this: "England is a democracy, presided over by a monarchy, and governed by an oligarchy." That sounds a paradox, but it is, I believe, a fact, and a fact that can be proved.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Leaving out the House of Lords, which is patently and of set purpose oligarchical, let us look at the House of Commons. It consists of six hundred and seventy members. There is one feature which nearly all these members, except the Irish Nationalists, have in common. They are rich men. It has often been said there is no place where a poor man feels so isolated as in the English House of Commons. No legislature in the world can show so overwhelming a majority of wealthy members as the British Parliament. In theory, there is nothing to prevent any Englishman from being elected to the national assembly and rising to the premiership. But in practice it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. Englishmen are rather suspicious of the poor man in politics.

SPECIAL CASES.

There are a few M. P.'s who have been sent to Westminster to represent special causes, and whose election expenses are paid for them by interested societies. Practically they are salaried delegates. The Independent Labor party has at least one such representative in the House; the teachers in the Board Schools have another. There is nothing dishonorable in their position; many of the M. P.'s who have found their way into the legislature by these means have proved themselves valuable and efficient members. Nevertheless, they stand in a class apart from their colleagues; very few constituencies can be found to return them; and the country, as a whole, rather looks down on them than otherwise, fights suspiciously shy of them, and would never dream of accepting a leader from their ranks.

CHARACTER OF M. P.'S.

The sort of candidate that the average Englishman likes to vote for must first of all be "a gentleman," in the technical, if in no other sense. That is to say, he must have money, and be ready to spend it; he must have position, both social and commercial; and he must have received the imprimatur of one of the great public schools, like Eton or Rugby, or, at any rate, of Oxford or Cambridge. If in addition there stands to his credit a useful record of municipal service, if he is known as a generous employer of labor or as a large landowner or as the relative of a peer; above all, if he is a sportsman and plays cricket, or better still, races and hunts—then there is no constituency in the land that will not be glad to get him as its representative. The candidate that most appeals to the average Englishman is not a member of his own but of a higher standing—the great merchant, the aristocrat, the son of the old country family, the famous lawyer, the business man who has made his pile. This attitude, a relic, of course, of the old feudalism, is stronger, possibly, in the country than in the towns; but it is still immensely strong in the towns, and until Englishmen get rid of all that makes them so English, seems likely to remain so. One result of it is that practically it is only the wealthy and successful, the men of birth and the men of leisure who get into Parliament.

WHO BECOME CABINET OFFICERS.

This, to begin with, if it does not absolutely spell oligarchy, shows at least a pretty obvious tendency that way. But the House of Commons is not the real governing factor of England. It is ruled in its turn by the cabinet. Year by year the power of the cabinet grows greater and more irresponsible, and Parliament's control over it is continually dwindling. So long as he keeps his majority and avoids wounding too violently the feelings of his followers, an English premier may do pretty much as he pleases. If, therefore, England is really governed by an oligarchy, the proof of it must be looked for in the composition of the Cabinet. Now, how is the cabinet composed? What qualifies a man for admission into the sacred circle? Theoretically, any Englishman may become a cabinet minister, just as any American may rise to the Presidency; but actually the door is open to very few of the multitude who knock. In the first place, a custom which has now pretty much the force of law—at any rate, it is never violated—prescribes that only members of Parliament, members, that is, of the House of Lords and of the House of Commons, shall be eligible to the cabinet. That narrows the choice at once.

THE GOVERNING CLASS.

Secondly, a would-be cabinet minister must belong to the "governing class." What is this "governing class"? One of the ablest and most careful of English publicists, Mr. Sidney Low, has described it with precision. "It consists, roughly speaking, of the peerage and its off-shoots, the great landowners, and country families, and the comparatively limited number of wealthy persons of the mercantile, manufacturing, and professional classes, who are admitted to what is called 'society.' In fact, society, in this sense of the word, is almost coterminous with the governing class. It would be difficult to say what constitutes exactly the qualification for membership of this select body.

BIRTH, WEALTH AND LEISURE.

"Birth, wealth, leisure, are no doubt the main requisites. Without at least one, and preferably more than one, of the three, it is difficult to enter the circle."

Again, "It is rare, and always has been rare, for a man, not a member of one of the aristocratic or territorial families, nor closely associated by wealth, education, and social connections with the circle that includes those families, to enter the cabinet of Great Britain." Let me guard against one misapprehension. The governing order is not a caste. It is continually being recruited from below. The wealthy manufacturer, say of the second or third generation, marries into one of the territorial families, enters Parliament, and becomes forthwith assimilated to the governing class. Some men, like Disraeli, have forced their way into it by sheer weight of genius. Others, like John Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, have won a foothold by impressing their personality upon the masses of their fellow-citizens. But all these cases were those of rich men, who, before they entered the cabinet, had been distinctly accepted by society. What you will never come across in England is a poor man in a high political position, without influential connections and without the backing of society.

ONLY A FEW THOUSAND POSSIBLES.

You have, then, these few thousand noblemen, landowners, capitalists, merchants, and successful professional men, who make up the governing class—a class, as I have said, that is neither an aristocracy nor a plutocracy, nor merely "society," but a mixture of all three. It is from them, or at least, from such of them as belong to the Lords or Commons, that the Prime Minister inevitably chooses his colleagues. It is difficult, almost impossible, for him to break away from the circle. His opportunities do not allow him to consort much with people who are poor, unknown, and obscure. When he has to make up his ministry, he naturally consults his own little court of friends, followers, and allies; and they, as naturally, press the claims of their own associates—the men whom they meet at London luncheons and dinners and fashionable country-house parties, who call each other by their Christian names, who have been educated at the same little group of public schools and colleges, and have pretty freely intermarried with each other's relatives.

THE SYSTEM WORKS WELL.

The system leads at times to curious results, but on the whole it works fairly well. The country finds its affairs always honestly and usually efficiently administered, with men of good breeding, upright character, and a certain impressive stateliness at the helm. The process is not one of jobbery; for it does not happen that bad or incapable men are corruptly given posts for which they are unfit; but oligarchical, in its essence, it certainly is.

The system has its good as well as its bad side. "Its strong point," says the writer I have already quoted, "is that it provides a class of public men who, taken altogether, are very adequately equipped for their business. Their wealth and standing place them beyond all suspicion of the coarser kind of corruption; they are sufficiently above the need of earning a livelihood to be able to enter active politics in the prime of life; and from their position in society they grow early accustomed to deal with affairs in the spirit of men of the world.

A recent book, "The Log of a Cowboy," contains this characteristic Far Western story, told by one of the "cow-punchers" about the camp-fire: "I was at a dance once in Live Oak County, and there was a rough stuttering fellow there by the name of Lem Todhunter. The girls, it seems, didn't care to dance with him, and pretended they couldn't understand him. He had asked every girl at the party, and received the same answer from each—they couldn't understand him. 'W-w-w-ell, g-g-g-go to hell, then. C-c-c-can y-y-you understand that?' he said to the last girl, and her brother threatened to mangle him horribly if he didn't appologize, to which he finally agreed. He went back into the house and said to the girl: 'Y-y-you n-n-n-needn't g-g-g-go to hell; y-y-your b-b-b-brother and I have m-m-made other 'r-r-r-rangements'"

YES,—SIM,—AE,—SAYO, I LOO.

The statement of the Phoenix Savings B. & Loan Association condensed, shows:

Total subscribed capital, $7,903,000.00.

Total subscribed capital Hawaii Territory, $2,795,000.00.

Increase in subscribed capital year ending June 30th, 1903, 57½ per cent.

Increase in assets, year ending June 30th, 1903, 46½ per cent.

Dividends, from 9 per cent upwards, upon different classes of full participating stock.

One year term savings accounts, 6 per cent.

Ordinary savings accounts, withdrawable any time, 4½ per cent.

All funds are secured by first liens on real estate improved, on Pacific Coast and Honolulu, worth at least fifty per cent more than amount loaned, security constantly increased by repayment monthly of part principal and interest. In addition, the directors and manager's large Reserve Fund or Permanent Capital guarantees besides their reputation against any possible loss. We do not encourage our members to withdraw by giving them larger profits than the ones who stay to the 100th month and longer, as it would not be consistent with sound business judgment or safety to do so. Robert Slaughter, General Agent, Judd building, Fort street entrance, Honolulu, H. T.

THE ANVIL CHORUS.

For the benefit of the "big" man with the tiny hammer, note:

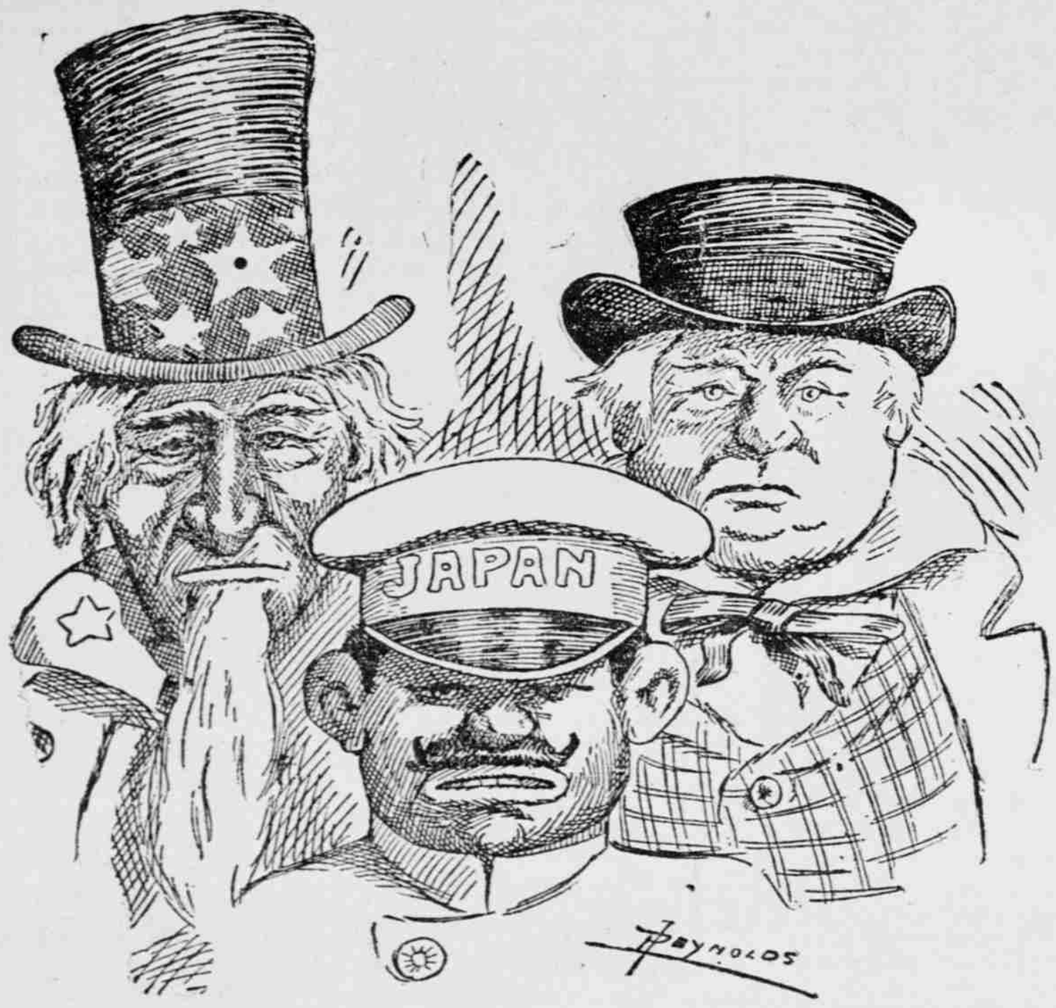
1. The highest price of the Douglas Patent Closet of the highest grade is only $50.00. It has never been more.

2. The lowest price is $25.00 with intermediate prices of $35.00 and $40.00. Every "Douglas" is guaranteed for three years from the date of sale, against imperfections in workmanship and material.

3. Advertising has not raised the price of the "Douglas," one cent. The increasing sale of the "Douglas" tends to lower the price. Watch!

4. In the "musical" interpretations of the "anvil chorus," as invidiously circulated by the "Douglas" enemies, the holds are read as notes; the public knows the "rest."

5. Cut this out and paste it in your hat for future reference.



EYES ON THE RUSSIANS.